

LAND USE ELEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION: LAND USE ELEMENT PLAN

The Land Use Element Plan provides the primary direction for achieving the Master Plan's guiding principles as well as the designation of land use categories throughout the County. It also acts as the framework for the other element plans which comprise the County's Master Plan. The 2004 Land Use Element Plan continues to support the use of the Development Envelope concept, which has been part of all Comprehensive Plans since 1977. The Development Envelope, an area generally defined by I-95/Route 40 and the Route 24 corridor north to Bel Air and Forest Hill, is a growth management tool designed to ensure that planned development is located in suitable areas that can be provided with necessary public services.

This Plan consists of five primary sections dealing with demographics and land development capability, public participation, growth management and resource conservation, community area plans, and implementation. The Plan also contains two maps - the Land Use Map and the Natural Features Map.

Section One, Demographics and Land Capability, provides basic population and land inventory data. The demographic information presented is based on Census data and includes projections to 2025. The potential development capacity of land both inside and outside the Development Envelope is also examined as part of this Plan. This information is used to ensure that there is sufficient vacant land to accommodate projected growth, and to support the policies set forth in this Plan.

Information is provided for agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrially zoned lands. Studies indicate that there is sufficient undeveloped residential, commercial, and industrial land within the Development Envelope to address projected growth for the life of this Plan. Based on past development trends, there is also sufficient capacity within the rural areas to accommodate anticipated growth for over 30 years. Detailed information on the procedures used to determine land use capabilities is provided in the June 2003 "Harford County Residential Vacant Land Inventory" and "Agricultural Land Inventory", and in the December 2002 "Harford County Retail Growth Analysis, and the November 2002 "Harford County Industrial Land Study".

The land use designations shown on the Land Use Map are discussed in the Plan's text. They are the guide to understanding the County's policy on appropriate uses for land, as well as the relationships between and among these uses. The pattern of development and intensity of land use described in the Land Use Element Plan represents anticipated uses for the next decade. The map reflects the directions and intentions outlined in the Growth Management and Resource Conservation Section.

The Public Participation section provides information on the planning process in Harford County. It also describes the public participation method used to develop this Plan.

The Growth Management and Resource Conservation section consists of six elements. Each element contains a goal, issues, policies, and implementation strategies. Top issues identified by the community, through a series of public meetings, are included in each element. Each issue identified in the Plan is presented exactly in the terms as set forth by the public. Implementation strategies included in this section take into consideration comments received from the public during workshop

sessions. This section also establishes the connection between the Land Use Element Plan and other adopted element plans.

The section begins with a discussion of Designated Growth Areas. This replaces the Development Envelope chapter of the 1996 Plan. It is followed by Redevelopment and Revitalization, which is new to the 2004 Plan. Preservation Areas addresses topics previously found in the Rural Area and Historic Preservation sections. Natural Resources addresses topics previously associated with Environmental Resources and Mineral Resources. Because Community Facilities deals with a variety of public services and facilities, this discussion area will address more issues than the other sections. A special emphasis will be placed on topics particularly relevant to this Plan. The final topic included in this section is Economic Development.

The Community Areas Plans section provides general descriptions of the 12 areas, and identifies major land use issues for each community area. These area descriptions and plans will serve as the basis for guiding future planning activities within these communities.

The Implementation section outlines a work program for completing the initiatives set out in the Plan. A priority is assigned to each of the items identified. The priorities should be reviewed annually to evaluate progress and make any needed adjustments to the work program. The section also identifies the County agency or agencies that will be chiefly responsible for implementation. It also identifies if any of the recommendations involve capital expenditures.

As required in the Planning Act of 1992, the Master Plan and the Land Use Element Plan will be reviewed every six years for consistency with the State "Visions." It will also be adjusted to allow for the consideration of changing factors in land use policies, and to provide for a comprehensive review of all plan elements in a uniform manner.